

Healthy Homes: booklet series

Insects, Rodents, other Pests

Identify the Problem:



Our own food supply can attract other animals that live around our homes. This is why roaches, mice, rats, moths, worms or other unwanted pests sometimes invade our houses and apartments, especially in urban areas where people live closer together.

The best way to reduce this unwanted presence of pests, then, is to make the food and water in our homes less accessible to animals. This may mean keeping a cleaner home.

What Can They Do?

Insects and rodents can carry and spread diseases that are harmful to humans, and is therefore a health hazard to eat food that comes into contact with them.

In addition, some larger pests such as mice and rats actually carry and transmit other pests, such as fleas and ticks.

Skeletal fragments from cockroaches, as well as fecal droppings from cockroaches and rodents, are very common allergens. They can trigger asthma attacks as well as allergic reactions such as stuffy nose, sneezing, sinus or breathing problem. Where these pests have been, their droppings are sure to be there too!

Many people use chemical pesticides to rid their homes or apartments of pests. These pesticides can be hazardous to people as well. Integrated pest management (IPM) is a term for natural ways to get rid of pests without the use of harsh chemicals. Contact the Bernalillo County Environmental Health Office for IPM information.



Where Are Pests?

Rodents and insects-like all animals- need food, water, shelter and usually warmth in order to survive.

Therefore, pests can be anywhere in your home where they can find any one of these things. This includes:

- Countertops
- Sinks and drains
- Puddles and standing water
- Cracks, crevices and corners



- Trash cans
- Pantries and cabinets where food is stored
- Underneath sinks, behind toilets
- In small crawl spaces
- Anywhere that food has been left out

Taking action Against Pests



Reducing pests from our homes means reducing their access to food, water, shelter and warmth, as mentioned above. It also means reducing their ability to move around within your home and travel in and out of your home.



Store all grains in tightly sealed plastic, glass or metal containers. This includes rice, pasta, oats, flour, sugar, and breakfast cereal.



Taking action Against Pests

- Clean up all of your dirty dishes after every meal.
- Never let food or dirty dishes remain in your sink for any length of time, and especially not overnight. Don't leave your pet's food or water out overnight.
- Clean and wipe down all tables and countertops after every meal. Never let crumbs or spills linger in your home.
- Sweep and mop once or twice a week, especially in the kitchen and bathroom



- Do not allow any puddles or standing water to develop in your kitchen or bathroom. Check under the sink for any leaks.
- Use caulk to seal any cracks or crevices along floors or walls, where pests may enter from outside.
- Use steel wool to plug up larger holes in your foundation, near pipe or vent entry points.

Other Resources:

The Bernalillo County Office of Environmental Health's web page on pests and vectors:

www.bernco.gov

Depts., offices → environmental health

**The Environmental Protection Agency's web page
On controlling pests around the home:**

www.epa.gov/pesticides

**The National Pesticide Information Center's web page on
pest control:** www.npic.orst.edu/pest.htm

**The Bio-Integral Resource Center web site on Integrated
Pest Management:** www.birc.org

The National Pest Management Association:
www.pestworld.org

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